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London May 6th 12 o'Clock at Night

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Sir

As the Post will go off in the morning at [illegible] o'Clock for Falmouth, I have but very little time for informing you of an unexpected event, which at this moment agitates the minds of people in this country, and which seems to make a war inevitable. On getting up this morning I received a Note from a friend of mine, who is a member of Parliament telling me that three thousand Seamen had been press'd the night before, that on tuesday afternoon there had sailed from Portsmouth six ships of war, and that at four o'Clock the commons were to receive a message from his majesty. The moment I received this intelligence I hurried down to the gallery of the House of Commons, which I found [illegible] tho' it was not [illegible] the House was very full at four, [illegible]

Mr. Pitt appeared at the Bar of the House [illegible] the King. the contents of which was: that his Majesty had received information of two english vessels having been captured at Nootka sound, on the northwestern coast of America, by two Spanish Ships of war: that the crews of the vessels [illegible]

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their Crews sent prisoners to a Spanish port. The taking of one of these Veſsels had before been notified by the Spanish ambaſsador, who at the same time desired that measures might be taken for preventing british subjects frequenting those coasts, which had been previously occupied by the subjects of Spain. complaints were also made of the fisheries carried on by british Subjects, in the Seas adjoining to the spanish continent, as being contrary to the rights of the crown of Spain. In consequence of this communication, a demand was immediately made by order of the english court, for adequate satisfaction, & for restitution of the Ships, previous to any other discussion. By the Spanish answer it appears that these Veſsels with their Crews had been set at liberty by the viceroy of mexico, but this on the supposition that nothing but the ignorance of the rights of Spain had induced the people of other Nations to come to those coasts for the purpose of making establishments for carrying on Trade &c. No satisfaction was made or offered, & a direct claim was asserted by the court of Spain, to the exclusive rights of [illegible] commerce in that part of the world. that his majesty had directed his minister at

Madrid to make a fresh representation on this subject & to claim full & adequate satisfaction as the case requires; & that his majesty having also received information that considerable armaments are carrying on in Spain, has given orders to make such preparations as may put it in his majesty's power to act with vigour & effect in support

[illegible]

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of the ~~[illegible]~~ of his crown &c: this majesty recommends it to his commons, on whose zeal he has much reliance, to enable him to take such measures, & to make such augmentation of his forces as may be necessary for this Purpose — Mr Pitt moved, ~~the~~ it was ordered, that the kings message should be taken into consideration tomorrow — Mr Fox said many important observations had occurred to him, which he should offer on the morrow; in the mean time he hoped there would be a common feeling in the house to support the honor of England.

as soon as the house rose I went amongst the members I was acquainted with, & afterwards mixed in company with others. [illegible] my life I do not remember [illegible] have been amongst such insolent bullies. They were all for war talked much of Old England & the british Lion, laughed at the Idea of drubbing the Dons, began to calculate the millions of dollars they would be obliged to pay for having insulted the first power on Earth, seemed uneasy [illegible] lest the Spaniards should be alarmed at the british ~~[illegible]~~ strength, ask pardon for what they have done & come immediately to terms — I regret exceedingly, my d Sir, that the packet sails so soon — that I cannot send you, by her, the resolutions of the house of commons on this subject — The mail for Falmouth went off at 9 o'clock this night & this letter will go by tomorrow mornings post which I am told will arrive before the packet sails — I have written

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it is ~~very~~ great haste as you will very easily perceive — I shall sail for America in the June Packet & in the interim I request you will receive my sincere assurances of those sentiments with which you always inspire those who have the good fortune to be as well acquainted with you as is your friend & most obliged

J. Rutledge